

## Learning Indicators for Engagement

The following text can be use as a reference when completing the Engaging Instruction Checklist located in the Learning Guide.

### 1. Vision of Engaged Learning

- *Responsible for Learning.* Students take charge of their own learning and are self-regulated. They define learning goals and problems that are meaningful to them; understand how specific activities relate to those goals; and, using standards of excellence, evaluate how well they have achieved the goals. Successful, engaged learners also have explicit measures and criteria for assessing their work as well as benchmark activities, products, or events for checking their progress toward achieving their goals.
- *Energized by Learning.* Engaged learners find excitement and pleasure in learning. They possess a lifelong passion for solving problems and understanding ideas or concepts. To such students, learning is intrinsically motivating.
- *Strategic.* Engaged learners continually develop and refine learning and problem-solving strategies. This capacity for learning how to learn includes constructing effective mental models of knowledge and resources, even though the models may be based on complex and changing information. Engaged learners can apply and transfer knowledge in order to solve problems creatively and they can make connections at different levels.
- *Collaborative.* Engaged learners understand that learning is social. They are able to see themselves and ideas as others see them, can articulate their ideas to others, have empathy for others, and are fair-minded in dealing with contradictory or conflicting views. They have the ability to identify the strengths and intelligences of themselves and others.

### 2. Tasks for Engaged Learning

- *Challenging.* Unlike tasks usually offered in schools, challenging tasks are typically complex and required sustained amounts of time. Such tasks also require students to stretch their thinking and social skills in order to be successful.
- *Authentic.* Authentic tasks correspond to tasks in the home and workplace. They are closely related to real-world problems and projects, build on life experiences, require in-depth work, and benefit from frequent collaboration. Such collaboration can take place with peers and mentors within school or with diverse people outside of school.
- *Integrative/interdisciplinary.* Challenging and authentic tasks often require integrated instruction, which blends disciplines into thematic or problem-based pursuits, and instruction that incorporates problem-based learning and curriculum by project.

### 3. Assessment of Engaged Learning

- *Performance-Based*. Students construct knowledge and create artifacts to represent their learning. Ideally, students also are involved in generating performance criteria and are instrumental in the overall design, evaluation, and reporting of their assessment.
- *Generative*. The overriding purpose of assessment is to improve learning. To that end, assessment should closely match the goals of the curriculum; represent significant knowledge and enduring skills, content, and themes; and provide authentic contexts for performance. The performance criteria should be clear, well articulated, and part of the students' learning experience prior to assessment. Indeed, developing standards of excellence for learning and thinking is an important part of learning.
- *Interwoven with Curriculum and Instruction*. Assessment should include all meaningful aspects of performance. It should encompass the evaluation of individual as well as group efforts; self-, peer, and teacher assessments; attitudes and thinking processes; drafts or artifacts of developing products as well as final products; open-ended as well as structured tasks; and tasks that emphasize connections, communication, and real-world applications. Multiple measures (e.g., surveys, inventories, journals, illustrations, oral presentations, demonstrations, models, portfolios, and other artifacts of learning) are needed to assess "big ideas" and complex learning outcomes over time.
- *Equitable Standards*. Parents and students should be familiar with the standards that apply to all students and be able to evaluate the performance of an individual or group using those standards.

### 4. Instructional Models and Strategies for Engaged Learning

- *Interactive*. Instruction actively engages the learner.
- *Generative*. Generative instruction encourages learners to construct and produce knowledge in meaningful ways by providing experiences and learning environments that promote deep, engaged learning. Generative instruction also encourages learners to solve problems actively, conduct meaningful inquiry, engage in reflection, and build a repertoire of effective strategies for learning in diverse social contexts.

### 5. Learning Context for Engaged Learning

- *Knowledge-Building Learning Community*. The learning community resists fragmentation and competition and enables students to learn more collaboratively.
- *Collaborative*. In learning communities, intelligence is assumed to be distributed among all members. Collaborative classrooms, schools, and communities encourage all students to ask hard questions; define problems; take charge of the conversation when appropriate; participate in assessments and in setting goals, standards, and benchmarks; have work-related conversations with various

adults in and outside school; and engage in entrepreneurial activities.

- *Empathetic*. Learning communities search for strategies to build on the strengths of all members. These strategies are especially important for learning situations in which members have very different prior knowledge.

## 6. Grouping for Engaged Learning

- *Heterogeneous*. Heterogeneous groups include males and females and a mix of cultures, learning styles, abilities, socioeconomic status, and ages. This mixture brings a wealth of background knowledge and differing perspectives to authentic, challenging tasks.
- *Flexible*. Flexible groups are configured and reconfigured according to the purposes of instruction. This flexibility enables educators to make frequent use of heterogeneous groups and to form groups, usually for short periods of time, based on common interests or needs.
- *Equitable*. The use of both flexible and heterogeneous groups is one of the most equitable means of grouping. It ensures increased opportunities to learn for all students.

## 7. Teacher Roles for Engaged Learning

- *Facilitator*. The teacher provides rich environments, experiences, and activities for learning by incorporating opportunities for collaborative work, problem solving, authentic tasks, and shared knowledge and responsibility.
- *Guide*. In a collaborative classroom, the teacher must act as a guide - a complex and varied role that incorporates mediation, modeling, and coaching. When mediating student learning, the teacher frequently adjusts the level of information and support based on students' needs and helps students to link new information to prior knowledge, refine their problem-solving strategies, and learn how to learn.
- *Co-Learner and Co-Investigator*. Teachers and students participate in investigations with practicing professionals. Using this model, students explore new frontiers and become producers of knowledge in knowledge-building communities. Indeed, with the help of technology, students may become the teachers as teachers become the learners.

## 8. Student Roles for Engaged Learning

- *Explorer*. Students discover concepts and connections and apply skills by interacting with the physical world, materials, technology, and other people. Such discovery-oriented exploration provides students with opportunities to make decisions while figuring out the components/attributes of events, objects, people, or concepts.
- *Cognitive Apprentice*. Students become cognitive apprentices when they observe, apply, and refine through practice the thinking processes used by real-world practitioners. In this model, students reflect on their practice in diverse

situations and across a range of tasks, and they articulate the common elements of their experiences.

- *Producers of Knowledge*. Students generate products for themselves and their community that synthesize and integrate knowledge and skills. Through the use of technology, students increasingly are able to make significant contributions to the world's knowledge.

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